Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claim 20, and amend claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 12, 14 and 16 as shown in the following list of claims. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A communication station adapted for contactless communication with transponders and with further communication stations, comprising:

first protocol-executing means configured to function according to station-transponder protocol, the first protocol-executing means being configured to effect communication between the communication station and at least one transponder while observing the station-transponder protocol, the at least one transponder being a passive transponder that does not have any power supply of its own;

second protocol-executing means configured to function according to a station-station protocol that differs from the station-transponder protocol in respect of at least one protocol parameter, the second protocol-executing means being configured to effect communication between the communication station and at least one further communication station while observing the station-station protocol;

first signal-processing means electrically connected to the first protocol-executing means, the first signal-processing means being configured to code signals using ~~only~~ Miller code and decode signals using ~~only~~ Manchester code for contactless station-transponder communication, the first signal-processing means being further configured to modulate and demodulate the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication;

second signal-processing means electrically connected to the second protocol-executing means, the second signal-processing means being configured to code and decode signals for contactless station-station communication, the second signal-processing means being further configured to modulate and demodulate the signals for the contactless station-station communication, the second signal-processing means being configured to code and decode the signals

using one of a non-return-to-zero code and an FM zero code for the contactless station-station communication; and

a transmission coil electrically connected to the first signal-processing means to transmit the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication from the first signal-processing mean and to receive the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication to be processed by the first signal-processing mean, the transmission coil being also electrically connected to the second signal-processing means to transmit the signals for the contactless station-station communication from the second signal-processing mean and to receive the signals for the contactless station-station communication to be processed by the second signal-processing mean, the transmission coil being configured to provide an energy-supply signal to the at least one transponder to supply the at least one transponder with energy.

~~transmission means electrically connected to the first and second signal-processing means to transmit and receive the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication and the signals for the contactless station-station communication to and from the first and second signal-processing means, the transmission means being configured to receive and transmit electromagnetic signals for contactless communication with the transponders and the further communication systems.~~

2. (currently amended) A communication station as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first protocol-executing means have energy-supply signal generating means that are configured to generate ~~an~~ the energy-supply signal each time the handling of the station-transponder protocol starts, and wherein the second protocol-executing means have synchronizing-signal generating means that are configured to generate a synchronizing signal each time the handling of the station/station protocol starts.

3. (previously presented) A communication station as claimed in claim 1, wherein the station-station protocol is operative to cause a minimal energy consumption at the communication station when communicating with the at least one further communication station.

4. (previously presented) A communication station as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first protocol-executing means are configured to function according to the station-transponder protocol that is configured to communicate with a plurality of transponders, and wherein the second protocol-executing means are configured to establish a communication connection to a plurality of communication stations.

5. (currently amended) An integrated circuit for a communication station for contactless communication with transponders and with further communication stations, comprising:

first protocol-executing means configured to function according to a station-transponder protocol, the first protocol-executing means being configured to effect communication between the communication station and at least one transponder while observing the station-transponder protocol, the at least one transponder being a passive transponder that does not have any power supply of its own;

second protocol-executing means configured to function according to a station-station protocol that differs from the station-transponder protocol in respect of at least one protocol parameter, the second protocol-executing means being configured to effect communication between the communication station and at least one further communication station while observing the station-station protocol;

first signal-processing means electrically connected to the first protocol-executing means, the first signal-processing means being configured to code signals using ~~only~~ Miller code and decode signals using only Manchester code for contactless station-transponder communication, the first signal-processing means being further configured to modulate and demodulate the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication;

second signal-processing means electrically connected to the second protocol-executing means, the second signal-processing means being configured to code and decode signals for contactless station-station communication, the second signal-processing means being further configured to modulate and demodulate the signals for the contactless station-station communication, the

second signal-processing means being configured to code and decode the signals using one of a non-return-to-zero code and an FM zero code for the contactless station-station communication; and

a terminal electrically connected to the first signal-processing means to transmit the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication from the first signal-processing mean to a transmission coil for transmission and to receive the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication from the transmission coil to be processed by the first signal-processing mean, the terminal being also electrically connected to the second signal-processing means to transmit the signals for the contactless station-station communication from the second signal-processing mean to the transmission coil for transmission and to receive the signals for the contactless station-station communication from the transmission coil to be processed by the second signal-processing mean, the transmission coil being configured to provide an energy-supply signal to the at least one transponder to supply the at least one transponder with energy.

~~a terminal electrically connected to the first and second signal-processing means to transmit and receive the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication and the signals for the contactless station-station communication to and from the first and second signal-processing means, the terminal being configured to be connected to transmission means for contactless communication with the transponders and the further communication systems.~~

6. (currently amended) An integrated circuit as claimed in claim 5, wherein the first protocol-executing means have energy-supply signal generating means configured to generate ~~an~~ the energy-supply signal each time the station-transponder protocol starts, and wherein the second protocol-executing means have synchronizing-signal generating means that are configured to generate a synchronizing signal each time the handling of the station-station protocol starts.

7. (previously presented) An integrated circuit as claimed in claim 5, wherein the station-station protocol is configured to minimize energy consumption at the communication station when communicating with the at least one further communication station.

8. (previously presented) An integrated circuit as claimed in claim 5, wherein the first protocol-executing means are operative to function according to the station-transponder protocol, which is adaptive to communicate with a plurality of transponders, and wherein the second protocol-executing means are configured to establish a communication connection to a plurality of communication stations.

9. (currently amended) A communication system adapted for contactless communication, comprising:

a plurality of transponders, the transponders being passive transponders that do not have any power supply of their own;

a plurality of communication stations, each comprising:

a microprocessor configured to execute a station-transponder protocol for contactless station-transponder communication with at least one of the transponders and a station-station protocol for contactless station-station communication with at least one of the communication stations, wherein the station-station protocol differs from the station-transponder protocol by at least one protocol parameter, the microprocessor being further configured to code signals using ~~only~~ Miller code and decode signals using ~~only~~ Manchester code for the contactless station-transponder communication and to code and decode signals for the contactless station-station communication,-the microprocessor being further configured to modulate and demodulate the signals for the contactless transponder communication and to modulate and demodulate the signals for the contactless station communication, the microprocessor being configured to code and decode the signals using one of a non-return-to-zero code and an FM zero code for the contactless station-station communication; and

~~transmission means~~ a transmission coil electrically connected to the microprocessor to transmit and receive the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication and the signals for the contactless station-station communication to and from the microprocessor, the transmission coil being configured to provide an energy-supply signal to the transponders to supply the transponders with energy ~~the transmission means being configured to receive and transmit electromagnetic signals for contactless communication with the transponders and the communication systems~~.

10. (canceled).

11. (previously presented) A communication system as claimed in claim 9, wherein each of the transponder is an RF tag.

12. (currently amended) A communication system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the microprocessor is configured to generate ~~an~~ the energy-supply signal.

13. (previously presented) A communication system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the microprocessor is configured to generate a synchronizing signal.

14. (currently amended) A communication station adapted to communicate with a plurality of transponders, comprising:

a microprocessor configured to execute a station-transponder protocol for contactless station-transponder communication with at least one of the transponders and a station-station protocol for contactless station-station communication with other communication stations, the transponders being passive transponders that do not have any power supply of their own, wherein the station-station protocol differs from the station-transponder protocol by at least one protocol parameter, the microprocessor being further configured to code signals using ~~only~~ Miller code and decode signals using ~~only~~ Manchester code for the contactless station-transponder communication and to code and decode signals for the contactless station-station communication, the microprocessor being further configured to modulate and demodulate the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication and to modulate and demodulate the signals for the contactless station-station station communication, the microprocessor being configured to code and decode the signals using one of a non-return-to-zero code and an FM zero code for the contactless station-station communication; and

~~transmission means~~ a transmission coil electrically connected to the microprocessor to transmit and receive the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication and the signals for the contactless station-station communication to and from the microprocessor, the transmission coil being configured to provide an energy-supply signal to the transponders to supply the

transponders with energy ~~the transmission means being configured to receive and transmit electromagnetic signals for contactless communication with the transponders and the other communication systems~~.

15. (previously presented) A communication station as claimed in claim 14, wherein each of the transponders is an RF tag.

16. (currently amended) A communication station as claimed in claim 14, wherein the microprocessor is configured to generate ~~an~~ energy-supply signal.

17. (previously presented) A communication system as claimed in claim 14, wherein the microprocessor is configured to generate a synchronizing signal.

18. (previously presented) A communication station as claimed in claim 1, wherein the second signal-processing means is configured to code and decode the signals using the FM zero code for the contactless station-station communication.

19. (previously presented) A communication station as claimed in claim 1, wherein the second signal-processing means is configured to code and decode the signals using the non-return-to-zero code for the contactless station-station communication.

20. (canceled).